

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

The Friday Letter

Vol. 8 No. 8

April 29, 1988

On the Hill



Bode, Kondratas Testify

On April 19, Assistant Secretary John W. Bode and Administrator Anna Kondratas testified before the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies.

Bode's main points included the following:

- o The President's budget recommendation, submitted to the Congress several weeks ago, is the highest funding request in the history of the food assistance programs. The request also adheres to the Bipartisan Budget Agreement—the Budget Summit—which calls for deficit reductions that exceed the requirements of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Reaffirmation Act of 1987.

- o In addition to the \$20.3 billion budget request for the food assistance programs, USDA will provide support to the programs with commodities purchased to stabilize market conditions under Section 32 and through CCC-acquired stocks.

- o Changes in the farm legislation have brought supply and demand into better balance, which has reduced large Federal inventories, especially in dairy. Under TEFAP, quantities of cheese and nonfat dry milk are available for FY 1988. USDA is monitoring the situation and will provide additional quantities to TEFAP if supplies permit.

(Bode, Kondratas Continued Page 2)

National School Lunch Act Amended

During an April 20 markup session, the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, chaired by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), voted unanimously to report out S.2156, a bill to amend the National School Lunch Act to require eligibility for free lunches to be based on the nonfarm income poverty guidelines prescribed by the Office of Management and Budget.



The bill, introduced by Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) and co-sponsored by Senator Leahy, corrects an error created inadvertently in the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Section 9(b) (1) (A) of the National School Lunch Act ties income eligibility for free school lunches to

(NSL Continued Page 2)

Senate Completes Welfare Program Markup

On April 20, the Senate Finance Committee, chaired by Senator Lloyd Bentsen (D-TX), completed markup of S.1511, a bill to reform the Nation's welfare program.

The full committee voted 17 ayes to 3 nays to report out the bill. The three opposing votes were by Senator William Armstrong (R-CO), Senator Malcolm Wallop (R-WY) and Senator William Roth (R-DE).

(Welfare Markup Continued Page 7)

During her testimony, Kondratas made the following points:

- o The 1989 request for the Child Nutrition Programs is \$4.6 billion. With funds carried over from FY 1988 and with Section 32 commodity purchases, the total program level is \$5.1 billion. FNS expects to serve about 4.1 billion lunches in 1989, with reimbursement rates increasing about 4.7 percent.

- o Under the Supplemental Feeding Programs, FNS' goal is to better target the funds to meet the needs of the highest priority groups. The 1989 request for the WIC Program is about \$1.88 billion. The request for CSFP is \$47.1 million. With \$4.8 million in 1988 carry-over funds, this amount will maintain peak participation achieved in 1988 throughout 1989.

- o The Food Stamp Program's budget request of \$12.5 billion will fully fund the estimated levels of benefits under current law. Included in the request is \$116 million for the Employment and Training Program to assist food stamp recipients to find work and leave the program.

- o A total of \$94.8 million is requested for Food Program Administration in 1989. This amount includes funding for several initiatives, resulting in part from recommendations from the General Accounting Office and the Office of the Inspector General.

No date, as yet, has been scheduled for markup.

(NSL Continued From Page 1)

that of the Food Stamp Program. In the past, this tie worked well because annual inflation adjustments to determine eligibility were implemented on July 1 of each year. This timing was especially convenient for food service administrators because school was not in session.

Section 803 of the McKinney Homeless bill, however, changed the date for making this inflation adjustment to October 1, to coincide with the beginning of the fiscal year. This change would force schools to redetermine the number of those categorically eligible for free lunches on October 1, in the middle of the school year. S.2156 would allow schools to continue to determine eligibility on July 1 of each year as they traditionally have done.

The McKinney provision changing the date to October 1 is effective July 1, 1988, and, therefore, Senator Lugar is urging Congress to act quickly on his legislation so that the July 1 adjustment date can be preserved.

Markup on the companion bill, H.R. 4306, is scheduled for April 28 by the House Education and Labor Committee.

Linda L. Boling
Editor, Public Information Staff

The Friday Letter is published every 2 weeks by the Public Information Staff of the Food and Nutrition Service. To update mailing address, or to alter number of copies received, please mail changes to the FNS Public Information Staff, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 823, Alexandria, VA 22302, telephone no. 756-3284.

Status of FY 1989 Budget

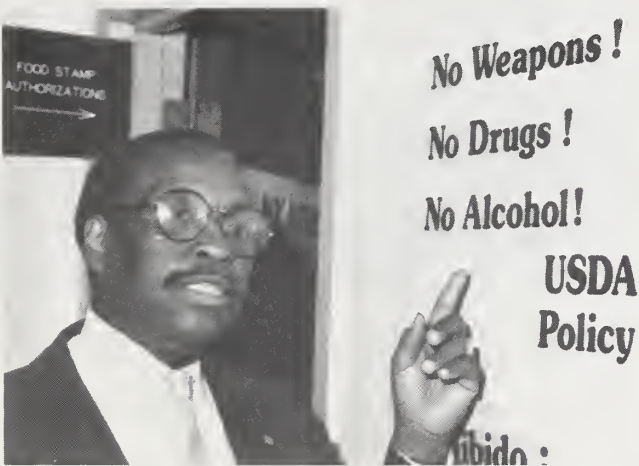
The conference on the FY 1989 Budget Resolution began April 20. At the end of the first round of discussion, on April 22, the House and Senate Budget Committees had not reached an agreement. The conference resumed April 26. We expect the conference to conclude the week of May 1.

New York City Field Office Develops Safeguards

"Necessity is the mother of invention," and the staff at NERO's New York City Field Office (NYCFO) has put that adage to work.

The necessity is the 17-member field office being responsible for more than 10,000 retailers authorized to accept food stamps, and the staff authorizing 40-50 retailers each week at two group authorization sessions. The invention is a new authorization process that combines some creative computer procedures with beefed-up security measures.

First of all, because of problems in the past, all retailers are now frisked for weapons before being allowed access to the building.

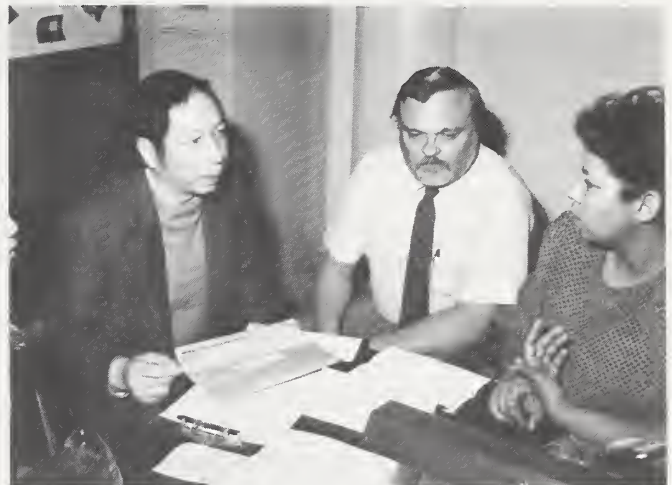


Field Director Ellis Cosey points out the sign that greets all retailers entering the New York City Field Office.

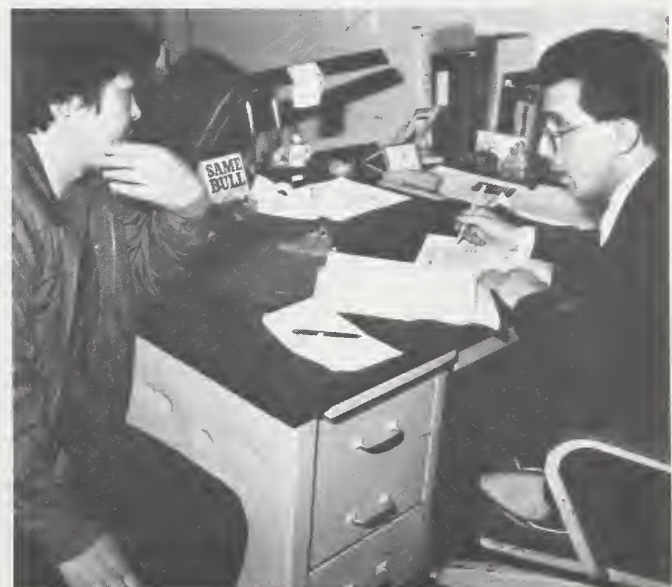


Retailers are frisked for weapons before entering the field office.

In addition, Field Director Ellis Cosey and Officers-in-Charge Raquel Santiago and Angela Mackey, working with the regional office and the Minneapolis Computer Support Center (MCSC), developed an 11-step checklist to guard against fraudulent applicants and to properly document the process that authorizes merchants to accept food stamps. The result has been a "substantial decrease in the amount of time it takes to check a store out and greater documentation of the process," said John Ghiorzi, assistant regional administrator.



David Saarela of the Minneapolis Computer Support Center (second from right) sits in as Food Program Specialist Marguerita Cora (right) reviews a retailer's documents.



Food Program Specialist Stewart Fogel (right) interviews a retailer.



Field Office Spotlight

Meet Hugh Sanders

MPRO's newest OIC, Hugh Sanders, was recently appointed to head the Pierre, South Dakota, field office.

Though new to FNS, Sanders has an extensive background in social services, having worked in a variety of administrative posts with the North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) over 7 years. Prior to his work with DHS in the Food Stamp Program, he was a loan officer, a director of operations at a training hospital, an administrator of a medical center, and served in the U.S. Army.

Sanders earned his BA degree in public administration from the University of North Dakota. His wife Bonnie is a legal secretary for a private law firm, son Patrick is currently taking a break from university studies during his junior year, and his youngest son Michael is serving in the Army. Sanders is an avid reader of history and dabbles in oil painting.



-Story and Photo by Craig Forman
MPRO Public Affairs Staff

(NYCFO Continued From Page 3)

"We want to utilize our equipment and the agency's expertise to the utmost," said Regional Administrator Harold McLean. "We have come a long way in the past 2 years, but we don't want to stop now." The regional office is integrating expanded procedures in all its field offices.

McLean pointed out that the MCSC staff has been a major factor in the process. "They never say we can't do it; they find a way to help us each time we ask," said McLean.

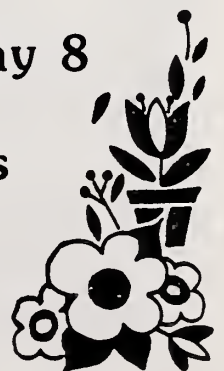


NERO Regional Administrator Harold McLean looks on as secretary Gilda Chapparo checks the computerized list of retailers.

-Story and Photos by
NERO Public Affairs Staff



Remember
Sunday, May 8
Mother's
Day



Floyd Miles II Makes His Musical Debut

Those who attended Black History Month celebrations at Park Center were treated to the rich bass-baritone voice of Floyd Miles II, from the Office of Analysis and Evaluation (OAE).

In addition to his OAE job, Miles is a member of the Washington, DC, Opera Company, having made his debut during the 1987-88 season. As a chorister, he performed in the opera "Fidelio," and sang a solo at the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's Diamond Jubilee at the Kennedy Center.



Floyd Miles II (right) appears in costume for "Il Trovatore" along with fellow cast members Bill Cummings and Jeffrey Wells.

One of Miles' most memorable appearances was "In Performance at the White House," an ongoing musical series at the White House featuring gospel and spiritual music, hosted by the world-renowned diva, Leontyne Price. As part of a quintet, Miles sang "Keep A-Inchin' Along" for President and Mrs. Reagan.

Miles was first exposed to the world of opera as a freshman at The University of Texas at Austin, where he was a music major. Classical music was a prerequisite for all voice majors, and he gravitated toward that area of

music. He later continued his music studies at Howard University in Washington, DC.

Miles was born into a musical family. His mother was a music major in college and is an accomplished pianist. As youngsters, he and his seven brothers and sisters sang in their church choir.

Miles has had encouragement and advice from several famous people. Leontyne Price advised him to continue to work diligently, to be prepared for disappointment, but not to let it get him down. For now, Miles plans to continue singing with the Washington Opera and trying out for lesser roles.

Miles has developed a very positive attitude toward his music, preferring to ignore discouraging words. "I really feel that positiveness in whatever one does plays a big factor in achieving success," he said.

-Story by Marilyn Kelly
Public Information Staff
Photo furnished by Floyd Miles II

Region Briefs New York Officials

NERO staff recently traveled to Buffalo, New York, to conduct briefings on TEFAP legislation for New York State officials.



NERO Administrator Harold McLean (left) reviews New York State TEFAP strategy with Deputy Commissioner Roger Quinby.

(Briefings Continued Page 6)

What's Up in Food Distribution?

Mountain Plains Regional Administrator David Alspach (left) congratulates Pueblo, Colorado, institutional food distributor George Andrews, Jr., after presenting him with a USDA certificate of appreciation for his firm's distribution of USDA commodities.



(Briefings Continued From Page 5)



Left to right: Elvi Priddle, aide to Congressman John LaFalce; John Magnarelli, Special Nutrition Programs director; Jane O'Bannon, aide to Senator Alfonse D'Amato; Harold McLean, Northeast regional administrator; and Joyce Clay, aide to Congressman Henry Nowak.

Denver Mayor Federico Pena (far left) was joined by Colorado Department of Social Services State Administrator Mark Tandberg and County Administrator Mary Krane in dedicating Denver County's new Commodity Supplemental Food Program supermarket. The recently opened facility is linked by computers to three eligibility offices and features a self-service pickup system for clients.



-Story and Photos by Craig Forman
MPRO Public Affairs Staff



Joan Ward of Long Island's TEFAP Advisory Council meets with NERO Administrator Harold McLean to discuss TEFAP.

-Story and Photos by
NERO Public Affairs Staff

The bill, sponsored by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY), is designed to restructure the basic program of public assistance for families in ways that emphasize parental responsibility through the enforcement of child support and expanded opportunities in education and training.

The bill proposes the following reforms:

- . Child support enforcement — The bill strengthens the enforcement system by requiring states:
 - . to establish guidelines to be used in setting child support awards;
 - . to provide mechanisms to periodically update the awards; and
 - . to institute a system of immediate wage withholding for all new or revised child support cases being enforced by the state agency.
- . Education, employment and training—The bill provides for a new JOBS program for welfare recipients under which states may provide work, training, and education activities aimed at helping and requiring welfare recipients to move from welfare to employment. This JOBS program will replace the current WIN program.
- . Transitional assistance — To facilitate the transition from welfare to work, the bill provides for subsidized child care for 9 months and for Medicaid coverage for 6 months, with an additional 6 months available subject to the payment of an income-related premium.
- . Assistance to families unemployed parents—The bill requires all states to assist needy families in which both parents are present but the principal earner is unemployed. Such assistance may be provided through a time-limited employment-oriented transitional program aimed at restoring the parents to productive employment.

Over the next 5 years, the proposed legislation is estimated to have a cost of about \$2.85 billion. The Finance Committee believes that this cost will be offset by other provisions in the bill which provide for the collection of debts owed the Federal government from tax refunds and which phase out the dependent care credit for families with income above \$70,000.

Senate floor debate on the bill is expected to begin in mid May.

—Story by Catherine Whitehurst
Governmental Affairs Staff



Compliance Branch Eliminates Retailer Food Stamp Abuse

Compliance Branch, building upon last fiscal year's record number of investigations, continues to show a steady increase in investigative activity.

During the first 6 months of Fiscal Year 1988, Compliance Branch investigated 3,966 retail food stores to determine how well they were complying with Food Stamp Program rules and regulations. Of the branch's completed cases, more than 90 percent showed some evidence of violation; 58 percent showed violations serious enough to warrant disqualification.

Investigating retailers with a high food stamp coupon redemption volume is the focus for the remainder of this fiscal year. This will be accomplished by a joint effort with the regional offices.

—Story by Joe McLin
Program Accountability Division

Job Opportunities

FNS is seeking to fill the vacant positions listed below. To be considered for one of them, submit an up-to-date SF-171, Application for Federal Employment, and current performance appraisal to the appropriate personnel office. If you are interested in a headquarters position, apply to the Operations Branch, Personnel Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexandria, Virginia

22302. Apply directly to headquarters office for all GM-14 and 15 positions. For regional positions, apply directly to the regional office. For details on the requirements for any of the positions listed below, consult the official vacancy announcement. These are posted on designated bulletin boards or copies can be obtained from the appropriate regional or headquarters personnel office.

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing By Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
o Clerk Stay in Schooler	(A)	GW-303	1/2	Open	88-SIS	FNS
o Clerk Typist	(A)	GS-322	2/3/4	Open until Filled	NONE	FNS
o Secretary Typing	(A)	GS-318	4/5/6	Open Continuous	88-999	FNS
o Program Analyst	(A)	GS-345	12/13	5/9/88	88-30	OAE
o Program Analyst	(A)	GS-345	7	5/31/88	88-31	OAE
o Program Analyst	(A)	GS-345	12/13	5/16/88	88-32	OAE
o Food Program Spec	(G)	GS-120	7	5/16/88	88-33	DASN
o Secretary Typing	(G)	GS-318	5/6	5/16/88	88-34	ORO
o Sup. Prog Analyst	(FNW)	GM-345	14	5/16/88	88-35	OAE
o Management Asst.	(G)	GS-344	6/7	5/16/88	88-H-9	HNIS

Office Location

FNS - Food and Nutrition Service
ORO - Office of Regional Operations
OAE - Office of Analysis and Evaluation
HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service
DASN - Deputy Administrator for Special Nutrition Service

Area of Consideration

(A) - All Sources
(FNW) - FNS Nationwide
(G) - Governmentwide